

**SUMMARY OF THE  
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
MARCH 13, 2003**

The Board of Directors of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on March 13, 2003, at 1:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) and was extended to subsequent calls on 3/14/03 and 3/25/03. Chair Dr. Paul Kimsey of the California Department of Health Services, led the meeting. The agenda for this meeting is shown in Attachment A, new action items are shown in Attachment B, incomplete action items from past meetings are shown in Attachment C, and a list of participants is shown in Attachment D.

**WELCOME NEW NELAC DIRECTOR**

Dr. Kimsey welcomed Ms. Lara Autry, newly appointed NELAC/NELAP Director to her first meeting with this Board. In response to his query, Ms. Autry informed the Board that planning for the appointment of a NELAC Executive Secretary, for at least the interim, is well along. She also noted that Mr. Dorsey Worthy, the responsible EPA Branch Chief is actively supporting NELAC.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Dr. Kimsey led review of minutes of this Board for their meetings of November 18, 2002, December 12, 2003, January 9, 2003, January 27, 2003, and February 13, 2003. All were approved with minimal edits except those for January 9, 2003, which were tabled for review at the next meeting.

**NELAC 9 Update**

Mr. Jerry Parr, Executive Director of the Institute for National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation (INELA), joined the Board to discuss plans for the Ninth NELAC Annual Meeting, scheduled for June 2-6, 2003 at the Hyatt Regency Islandia in San Diego, CA. He reported that the brochure is in the printshop for mailing shortly to the list of registrants for NELAC 8i and INELA members; on-line registration will be ready shortly, and final program details should be completed next week. He plans to visit hotel next week to refine meeting room details.

In response to Dr. Kimsey's query on apparent obstacles, Mr. Parr replied that he has just begun to receive indications from State employees of travel restrictions; most due to funding constraints, others in response to worldwide security issues.

**NELAC 9i UPDATE**

Dr. Kimsey asked about plans for the Ninth NELAC Interim Meeting. Mr. Parr replied that it is scheduled for January 24 - 29, 2004 at Le Meridien Hotel, in Dallas, TX. No other information is currently available.

**NELAC Standing Committee Issue**

Dr. Kimsey, with Mr. Davis, reported that the Transition Committee is considering the future of the current NELAC committees. Issues forwarded by the Proficiency Testing committee, with suggested changes are:

1. Stating the requirement and not listing a responsible party. (There was concern that if a responsible group was not listed then the requirement would not be completed.)
2. Changing all references of "the NELAC Standing Committee on Proficiency Testing" to "the NELAC Board of Directors".
3. Changing all references of "the NELAC Standing Committee on Proficiency Testing" to "an expert Committee on Proficiency Testing, designated by the NELAC Board of Directors".

Following discussion, there was consensus that, with the impending reorganization of NELAC, the Board should assume responsibility for such issues and appoint an expert committee if needed. It was agreed

that this could be proposed as a floor amendment at NELAC 9 for immediate adoption, if it is not raised sooner.

Dr. Kimsey agreed to respond to the PT committee of the Board's consensus. Ms. Autry will contact the chairs of standing committees to examine their chapters to look for similar issues.

### **Spring Strategic Planning Meeting**

Dr. Kimsey asked about the planned strategy meeting; Mr. Parr responded that an agenda is being drafted for a two-day caucus the first week of April, and that limited travel support may be available. The current plan is that the first day would focus on Performance Based Measurement Systems (PBMS) and the second day would be a continuation of the strategic planning meeting of December 2001. Mr. Parr will lead development of the PBMS discussion and Ms. Autry will lead development of the strategic planning session (Dr. Kimsey and Ms. Shields volunteered to assist her).

### **A2LA PTOB Issue**

Dr. Kimsey revisited the issue of A2LA being designated by this Board as a NELAC PTOB. Ms. Autry reported on discussions with staff from EPA's Office of Water (OW) regarding oversight of NELAC's PT program. A memo is being prepared to NIST from OW inquiring about their plans for their future role and their response to this memo will be a pivotal clarification (see next paragraph).

Ms. Shields noted that the recommendation by the NELAP accrediting authorities that A2LA be a NELAP PTOB was based on the explicit understanding that NIST was planning to discontinue its role as PTOB. Additionally, she stated that the accrediting authorities have expressed the need: 1) that NIST ensure that NELAC PT providers are following the NELAC requirements (and supply required data to the accrediting authorities in a timely manner) and 2) that oversight for additional parameters be provided. She also noted that this is a time-critical issue, since current PT accreditations expire in July. Several Board members expressed surprise to learn that NIST was planning to continue based on presentations elsewhere. It was agreed that NIST's response to the OW memo would be key in the Board's response to this issue. Ms. Autry agreed to contact OW with this concern. Ms. Shields will e-mail background information from the accrediting authorities to Board members for review. Dr. Kimsey will invite a representative of A2LA to the next meeting regarding this matter. Dr. Kimsey noted that this new information on NIST's intentions must be considered along with the NELAP accrediting authorities's proposal that A2LA be designated as a PTOB for all fields of testing.

At the invitation of the Board, Ms. Roxanne Robinson, representing A2LA (an accrediting body), joined the teleconference to explain her organization's preparations to support the NELAC PT program. She noted that there has been extensive investment in close coordination of their staff with NELAC, cooperation with the NELAC accrediting authorities, and A2LA is working to resolve potential inconsistencies between the NELAC Standard and international standards. She responded to several questions from Board members relating to A2LA's proposed actions in response to non-compliance with the Standard; she noted that an A2LA internal SOP addresses specifics and suggested that NELAC may wish to specify its own conditions that A2LA would then implement. She noted that coordination of responsibilities between A2LA and NIST would need to be resolved. She also noted that organizations are suspended immediately on the basis of objective evidence of non-compliance, and that communication of suspension can be arranged as needed. Ms. Robinson agreed to send additional materials to Board members for review.

The Board agreed to review these materials and further discuss this issue during its Strategic Planning Meeting next week.

### **Draft "Governmental Function" Letter**

Dr. Kimsey reviewed his draft letter from the Board to Dr. Paul Gilman of EPA, focusing first on the overall structure. There was a consensus the structure was suitable and several comments were made on

the associated details. Dr. Kimsey will collaborate, as needed, edit the letter and distribute it to Board members for review at the next meeting. Ms. Autry offered her editing support, to meet the generally agreed-on need for conciseness; she will complete a revision for discussion by 3/26/03.

**Other**

Ms. Autry noted the concern of the Regional Lead Assessors that the NELAP accrediting authorities accreditations will expire this summer; following discussion of the Board's earlier recommendation to the AARB, she agreed to contact the AARB for clarification.

Ms. Autry also reported receiving several queries about the mechanism that the private sector might have for interacting with the NELAC Board under NELAC constitutional changes due to be implemented at NELAC 9.

**NEXT MEETING**

Discussion will continue at the Board's Strategic Planning Meeting in Austin, TX next week.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled as a teleconference on Thursday, April 10, 2003, at 1:30 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST).

***DRAFT AGENDA***  
**March 13, 2003**  
**1:30 - 3:30 PM EST**

Welcome New NELAC Director

Approval of Minutes

11-18-02

12-12-02

1-09-03

1-27-03

2-13-03

NELAC 9 Update

NELAC Standing Committee Issue

Spring Strategic Planning Meeting

A2LA PTOB Issue

Draft “Governmental Function” Letter

Other

**NEW ACTION ITEMS  
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS/CHAIRS  
MARCH 13, 2003**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	Dr. Kimsey agreed to inform the PT committee of the Board's consensus (Board to assume responsibility).	ASAP
2	Ms. Autry will ask the chairs of standing committees to examine their chapters to look for similar issues.	ASAP
3	For the Spring Caucus, Mr. Parr will develop the agenda for the PBMS discussion; Ms. Autry will develop the agenda for the strategic planning (Dr. Kimsey and Ms. Shields will assist her).	3/11/03
4	Ms. Autry will contact OW to clarify the importance of NIST's response to the OW memo regarding their NELAC PTOB role.	ASAP
5	Ms. Shields will e-mail relevant background information on the PTOB issue to Board members.	3/18/03
6	Dr. Kimsey will invite a representative of A2LA to the next meeting to discuss the PTOB issue	3/25/03
7	Dr. Kimsey, Ms. Autry, and others will collaborate to edit the letter to Dr. Gilman and distribute it to Board members for review.	3/26/03
8	Ms. Robinson will send information to Board members on A2LA's PTOB program.	ASAP

**UNFINISHED ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS  
NELAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MARCH 13, 2003**

<b>NO</b>	<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
15	11/14/02	The Board (Dr. Kimsey) will draft a letter to EPA reiterating their consensus of the role of EPA in NELAC, based on discussions during NELAC 8i.	Ongoing
20	12/2/03	Silky will explore the possibility of an OEI database that could serve the function of the NELAC database.	ASAP
21	1/27/03	Board members will e-mail issues & talking points for the 1/31/03 meeting.	Complete
22	1/27/03	Dr. Kimsey will contact Mr. Worthy regarding the status of the NELAP/NELAC program reorganization.	Complete
23	2/13/03	Dr. Kimsey will draft a letter to EPA on the issue of lab accreditation as an inherently governmental function.	Complete
24	2/13/03	Discuss PTOB recommendation at next Board meeting.	Complete

Note: items that were noted as “Complete” in previous minutes have been deleted from this list.

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND CHAIRS MEETING  
MARCH 13, 2003**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Address</b>
Dr. Paul Kimsey Chair	CA Department of Health Services	T: (510)307-8419 F: (510)412-5848 E: pkimsey@dhs.ca.gov
Mr. R. Wayne Davis Chair-Elect	SC/DHEC Office of Environmental Lab Certification	T: (803)896-0972 F: (803)896-0850 E: davisrw@dhec.sc.gov
Ms. Silky Labie Past-Chair	FL Dept. of Environmental Protection	T: (850)488-2796 F: (850)922-4614 E: silky.labie@dep.state.fl.us
Ms. Lara Autry Director	USEPA	T: (919)541-5544 F: (919)541-4261 E: autry.lara@epa.gov
Mr. John Duncan Acting Executive Secretary	USEPA	T: (919)541-2187 F: (919)541-2357 E: duncan.john@epa.gov
Ms. Ann Marie Allen	MA Dept. of Environmental Protection	T: (978)682-5237 F: (978)688-0352 E: ann.marie.allen@state.ma.us
Mr. Thomas Maloney	USGS National Water Quality Laboratory	T: (303)236-3460 F: (303)236-3499 E: tmaloney@usgs.gov
Mr. Richard Sheibley	PA Department of Enviromental Protection	T: (717)705-2425 F: (717)783-1502 E: rsheibley@state.pa.us
Mr. Joe Slayton	USEPA/Region 3	T: (410)305-2653 F: (410)305-3095 E: slayton.joe@epa.gov
Mr. Gleason Wheatley	KY/Dept. of Environmental Services	T: (502)564-6120 F: (502)564-8930 E: gleason.wheatley@mail.state.ky.us
Ms. Aurora Shields	KS Dept. of Health and Environment	T: (785)296-6198 F: (785)296-8068 E: ashields@kdhe.state.ks.us
Ms. Roxanne Robinson (Invited Guest)	A2LA	T: (301) 644-3208 F: (301) 622-2974 E: rrobinson@a2la.org
Dr. Gene Tatsch (Contractor Support)	RTI	T: 919-541-6930 F: 828-628-0659 E: cet@rti.org